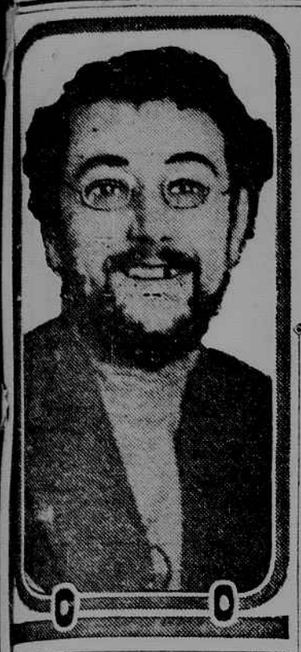
English Spy Penetrates Councils of Soviets

Sir Paul Dukes, as the Agent of the British Secret Service, Disguising Himself, Sometimes as a Bolshevik Factory Worker, Again as a Soldier and Even as a Member of the Notorious Extraordinary Commission, Got Close to Lenine and Trotzky. Soviets Placed a Price on His Head and Authorized Any Russian to Kill Him



SIR PAUL DUKES as a Bolshevist, one of his many disguises

By Joseph Shaplen

HOW Sir Paul Dukes British intelligence officer, lived for eighteen months in Petrograd, Moscow and other Russian centers, posed as an official of the Extraordinary Commission, became a member of the Petrograd Soviet, worked in a munition factory, joined the Red army, ran an extensive intelligence service for his government, and in the face of grave danger of almost certain capture and execution gathered valuable material on conditions in the land of Lenine and Trotzky. A friend and colleague of his was captured and shot.

ONE of the most fascinating chapters in the history of the Russian revolution has been written by a young Englishman, now only in his thirties, Paul Dukes. Dukes spent eighteen months in Soviet Russia. When as a member of the Red army he was to be sent to the Eastern front he deserted in the winter of last year, crossed into Lettland, and for six months followed the Polish armies and peasant insurrections in the region of Mozir, thus penetrating again into Soviet territory.

With the crushing of the peasant revolts by the Bolsheviki Dukes returned to England and is now on a lecture tour in this country. On his return to England he was knighted for his services.

Price on His Head

Dukes has been outlawed by the Bolshevik government and the agents of the notorious Extraordinary Commission, maddened by their inability to effect his capture, have finally issued a decree permitting any Russian citizen catching Dukes on Soviet territory to shoot him on the spot. He was accused by the Bolshevik authorities of being personally responsible for many disorders and uprisings in Soviet Russia and of being the head of the counter revolutionary conspiracies which have given the Bolsheviki so much trouble within the last two years.

Dukes denies emphatically that he ever engaged in any conspiracies against the Bolshevist government and says that his entire activity in Russia was confined to gathering information.

A member of a distinguished British family, Dukes was virtually brought up in Russia. He lived there for twelve years, studied at one of the Russian universities and after a course in the Petrograd Conservatoire became assistant to the director of the celebrated Marinsky Theater. He speaks and writes Russian fluently.

After the outbreak of the war in 1914, Dukes was appointed a member of the Anglo-Russian commission and served with great credit during the war. On the outbreak of the revolution in 1917, Dukes, who had close connections with revolutionary circles in the Russian capital, joined the rebellion and participated in the street fighting which resulted in the overthrow of the Czar.

Back as a Volunteer

Bitterly opposed to the Bolsheviki and regarding them as the real counter revolutionists, Dukes volunteered to go into Soviet Russia in November, 1918, after he had already left the country, and take charge of the British Intelligence Service. This was soon after the murder of Captain Cromie, the naval attaché of the British Embassy in Petrograd, by the Bolsheviki. His offer was accepted by the authorities in London and he set out for Finland, reaching the Russo-Finnish frontier.

Let Dukes himself tell how he entered Soviet Russia and his first experiences on arrival:

"In November, 1918, I found myself at the Finnish town of Viborg, close to the Russian frontier. My object was to enter Soviet Russia as a British intelligence officer. My entrance had to be made in secret, of course, as far as the actual crossing into Soviet territory was concerned. Once on Soviet territory, I had to be ready to play a part that would give me a free road to Petrograd.

"I set out to look for such assistance as was necessary to facilitate the execution of my aim. Fortunately, I encountered at Viborg two Russian officers who had been collaborators of Captain Cromie. I told them of my plan and they gladly agreed to help me. One of them undertook to precede me to Petrograd and warn an English friend of mine, to whom I will refer as Mr. March, of my forthcoming arrival. I had never met March before, but I knew that he was a friend of Captain Cromie. The other Russian officer offered me the hospitality of his home in Petrograd, where he had left a housekeeper and a servant.

Into Red Russia

"On November 24 I found myself in a little cottage on the bank of the River Sestra, separating Finland from Russia. The cottage belonged to some Finnish patrols. They were friends of the two Russian officers and were engaged in smuggling butter and Finnish money into Petrograd. They fixed me up with a paper which was a precise replica of the papers held by employees of the Extraordinary Commission, purporting me to be an official in the office of the chief commissar of the Extraordinary Commission in Petrograd.

"At 3 o'clock next morning we set out from the cottage and walked silently for a mile up the river, until we came to a ramshackle house on the Finnish side. Here the patrols dragged out a small boat from behind some bushes, to the stern of which there was attached a long rope, and let it silently into the water. They put a long pile inside and told me to push myself across to the Russian side, saying they would drag the boat in after me by the rope.

"'Beware,' they said, 'of that cottage you see on the other side. There are the Red patrols. God help you if they see you.'

"The Russian bank consisted of a meadow, the only open place along the river, and I asked my patrols why they had chosen that spot as my landing place, instead of directing me to the woods. They said they had chosen that spot because it was completely open and was the least likely to be watched. We shook hands and, taking a large drink of whisky from my flask, I jumped into the boat and was off.

"On coming very close to the Russian side I found difficulty in pushing my boat because of the ice that had formed along the bank. Realizing I had little time to lose, I abandoned my boat and made the bank across the ice. The noise, however, attracted the Red patrols. My Finn friends on the other side of the river saw them running out of their cottage with rifles in their hands and shouted to me:

"'Run for your life!'

"I scrambled up on the bank, and seeing the lights aglow brightly in the Red cottage I ran for my life across the meadow. When halfway across I lay down and watched the Reds run toward the bank. I heard them fire two shots at the Finnish side, but the Finns made no reply. In about five minutes the Reds retired to their cottage. All was still and I proceeded. After jumping across some fences and other barriers I found myself at an old deserted house, close to an open road. I concealed myself in the house until daybreak and then boldly walked toward the frontier railway station of Bielo-Ostroff and presented my papers. They were examined carefully by the station commissar, who approved them after asking me many questions, and gave me permission to proceed to Petrograd.

"As an employee of the Extraordinary Commission I, of course, traveled first class. Disguised in a worker's jacket, black leather breeches, fur cap with a tassel on top and a scarf, I resembled many of the other workers traveling in the same train and reached the Finland station in Petrograd after a short ride. On arrival at the station my papers were again examined, although this time in a rather cursory manner, and I passed out into streets with a throb.

His First Day

"One of the first things I observed when I came out of the Finland station was an old man leaning up against a gutter pipe, sobbing. I stopped.

"'What's the matter, old man?' I asked. 'Why are you weeping?'

"'I am cold and hungry,' replied the old man. 'For three days I have had nothing to eat.'

"I pushed a 40-ruble note into his hands. He looked at the money, then at me, and said:

"'Thank you, but what's the good of this money? Where shall I get bread?'

"I gave him a small loaf which I had brought along from Finland and passed on.

"My first destination was the home of Mr. March, who lived on the Fontanka, a street close to the Anitchkin Palace. Walking up the Nevsky—I thought I would be least likely to attract attention by walking rather than by riding—I looked at the half-deserted, disheveled street, once the glory of Petrograd, the street of great business, of gayety and fashion. A pall hung over the famous thoroughfare. The hand of death seemed to be resting upon it. Most of the stores were closed, barricaded with boards. Others that were still open yawned at the passerby with their empty windows. Now and then a lone cabman would wind his way in and out of the various intersections. Huge piles of dirt and snow graced the edges of the pavements. The miasma of Bolshevism polluted the very air. I was glad when I reached the corner of the Nevsky and and the Fontanka and turned toward the home of Mr. March.

"Looking about me carefully but unostentatiously and convincing myself that the street was clear I entered Mr. March's house. I was confronted at the door by a man who might and might not have been the porter. He let me in, closed the door behind him, locked it and placing himself in front of it asked in stern voice:

"Whom do you want?'

"'I want to see Mr. March,' I replied calmly. "Can you tell me the number of his flat?'

"I knew well the number of his flat, but thought it advisable to pretend ignorance on this point, in order not to show any close association with him in case of trouble, which I, of course, by this time suspected. My expectations proved correct.

"'Mr. March is not here,' bellowed the man. "'He is arrested and his flat is sealed. Do you know anything about him?'

"My first impulse was to flaunt my paper before him, showing that I was an official in the service of the Extraordinary Commission. On second thought, however, I realized it would have been a serious mistake for me to do that, for as an official of the Extraordinary Commission calling on March I should have known that he had been arrested, if his arrest were really a fact.

"'I don't know him and never saw him in my life,' I said, instead. 'But I was sent here by a friend of his to give him this little parcel.'

"Here I produced a parcel containing some handkerchiefs and a pair of socks, virtually the only baggage I brought with me into Russia.

"'He left this at the house of a friend in Alexandrovsk the other night,' I added. 'Of course, if he has been arrested I will take it back.'

"The man, who was undoubtedly an agent of the Extraordinary Commission, eyed me suspiciously for a moment or two, and said:

"'Well, then, you had better leave it.'

"I left the parcel and he let me out into the street.

"Later, I discovered that there had been a raid on March's house shortly before my arrival, that Mrs. March, his wife, was arrested, but that he himself escaped by running out the back door and jumping over a fence.

"That night I stayed at the home of my second officer friend, who had offered me the hospitality of his place when I met him in Viborg. He himself had not yet returned. I presented myself at the door of his house and was met by the housekeeper. She was very suspicious and refused to let me in. When I mentioned the name of her master and said I was a friend of his everything went well. I was received into the house and grew so friendly with the occupants that I was able to tell them next morning that I was an Englishman and had come to Petrograd on important government business.

"On the third day of my stay at the house a sheet of paper was found slipped under the door, addressed to Paviol Pavlovitch, my Russian Christian name and patronymic. The note said:

"'You can meet March after dinner between 5 and 6 p. m. on the third bench from the iron gate in the Summer Garden. He will be blowing his nose continually with a red handkerchief. You can meet me at the Fifth Soviet eating house on the Nevsky.'

"The note was signed 'Melnikoff,' the pseudonym of the first officer who preceded me.

Plotting an Escape

"I met March and he told me the story of his escape. He said that his wife was arrested, that he was being dogged by agents of the Extraordinary Commission, and that it was essential that he flee cross the frontier.

"I made it my first object to obtain the release of Mrs. March. I did this with the aid of a former secret service official of the Czar to whom I was introduced by March and who had also been in the service of Captain Cromie and was now a school inspector under the Bolsheviki. I will refer to him as Romanoff. An initial payment of 10,000 rubles sufficed to prepare the way for bribing the petty officers of the Extraordinary Commission—guards, sentries, etc.

"Mrs. March was kept in a room with sixty other prisoners. They were huddled together amid indescribable filth and slept on wooden bunks. The place of detention was the famous, or infamous, 'Gorochovaya, No. 2,' formerly the city prefecture and now the place of the Bolshevist inquisition in Petrograd and house of preliminary incarceration. All prisoners are first taken for interrogation to 'Gorochovaya Dva,' as the Russians call it. The place has since the advent of the Bolsheviki acquired the reputation of a house of blood and tears. Some day, when the full story of 'Gorochovaya Dva' is written it will eclipse the most grewsome tales of the torture chambers of the Middle Ages.

"All prisoners, especially Mrs. March, were subjected to daily interrogation. She was asked the same questions fifty times a day and her answers were invariably compared. She was also made to write her autobiography. Final interrogation lasted from 10 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening without interruption until she swooned and fell in a faint. In the evening she was informed that she probably would be executed. On that same day Romanoff informed me that he had made final arrangements for Mrs. March's escape. He told me to be waiting at 6 o'clock in the evening in a dark corner in the interior of St. Isaac's Cathedral, a short distance from 'Gorochovaya Dva.' I was to have a woman's hat and cloak concealed in the cathedral. I purchased these from one of the many women of the intelligenzia who were selling out their last belongings on the Nevsky.

"About 5 o'clock the next day Mrs. March was called out of her cell, thinking it to be her last interview on earth. The guard led her along a passage to the women's lavatory and motioned her to enter. She obeyed. In the lavatory, to her surprise, she found a shabby hat, a green shawl (by which I was to recognize her) and two slips of paper. One was a pass signed by the proper officials—the signatures, of course, being forged—saying that she entered 'Gorochovaya Dva' to see some prisoner relatives and that she was to be allowed out before 7 p. m. The other said, 'Walk straight to St. Isaac's and go in.'

"Mrs. March told me afterward that she was at first so bewildered that she did not know what to do. She followed the instructions, however, and walked past half a dozen guards into the street, giving up her pass at the door. She walked straight to St. Isaac's and I met her. She donned the hat and cloak I had provided, and that evening she was transferred safely across the Finnish frontier by Finnish smugglers of Romanoff's acquaintance. There she joined her husband."

A great deal of his time was devoted by Sir Paul Dukes to the study of the machinery and operation of the Extraordinary Commission. He formed no fewer than five organizations of assistants—later reduced to two—many of whom were planted by him in the Extraordinary Commission as agents, and thus obtained an inside view of that most terrible of all Bolshevist institutions.

Russia's Terror

So great is the power of the Extraordinary Commission, this giant octopus with a million tentacles extending into the home of nearly every inhabitant of the Russian cities, said Sir Paul, that even high Bolshevist officials live in terror of it. Its authority often exceeds that of the central government, and there have been conspicuous instances when even Lenine and Trotzky themselves were unable to override the decisions of the Extraordinary Commission.

The councils of five decide the fate of the people who are gathered by investigators. Below the investigators is an army of agents whose duty it is to follow the doings not only of the entire population of the towns, but also of the army and the lower ranks of the Communist party.

"Investigators vary greatly. It is in the hands of the investigator that the fate of any given victim really lies. Some investigators are sincere but demoniacal visionaries, who see the dawn of proletarian liberty through mists of non-proletarian blood. They are actuated by a wild longing for revenge. There are others who are merely corrupt, who are ready to sell themselves for a price and regard their jobs as means of making fortunes by bribery.

The Good Take Bribes

"The general public class these investigators quite simply as good or bad, the first being those who are human enough to take a bribe and let their victim go, and the second being those who show no mercy. When any one is arrested the first thing his friends do is to find out which investigator is entrusted with the case. If he is of the second class hope is given up at once. If the investigator in question is found to be 'good' the victim is considered lucky and means are taken to find out what the investigator's price is. The usual procedure of such an investigator is to put the victim through the usual interrogation but to ask only such questions as the victim is certain to answer satisfactorily. The investigator then reports to the council that he had found no incriminating evidence and it is up to the council to render the final verdict. In extreme cases, such as that of Mrs. March, release if achieved at all can be achieved only through the agency of the lowest employees of the commission. This has become rather difficult recently as the Bolsheviki, not trusting the lower employees, took to changing the personnel of subordinates every month or so and are finally utilizing only Chinese as the staff of guards.

"The usual method of interrogation consists in asking the victim a series of questions over and over again. The answers are checked up carefully. In case the authorities feel that the victim was really guilty of acts of 'counter-revolution' methods of torture are applied to elicit the desired information.

Torture Resorted To

"When I was in the Communist party I made the acquaintance of a commissar who boasted of his connection with 'Gorochovaya Dva,' where he was an investigator. Two of my assistants, having obtained a bottle of vodka one day, got him drunk and persuaded him to tell of some of the methods at 'Gorochovaya Dva.' He said that in case the authorities felt that a victim was concealing something from them they would apply methods of torture. The torture consisted in the rapid and consistent firing of revolvers in the vicinity of the place of interrogation, the feeding of a prisoner for days on nothing but salt herrings, but refusing to give him water to drink, flogging and the application of redhot needles to the quick of the fingers.

"'It got so on my nerves,' said this Communist testily, 'that I gave up that job and became a professional agitator.'

"It was as a professional agitator that I knew this neophyte of Bolshevism.

"During strikes the Extraordinary Commission sends agents into the factories to detect the strike leaders and at election time a strict watch is kept upon the workers to mark such as do not vote for the Communist candidates.

"The Extraordinary Commission is the strongest civil institution in Russia. There are many instances when it overrode the decrees of the central government. A prominent instance was the execution of four former grand dukes, cousins of the Czar, in the summer of 1919. They were Paul Alexandrovitch, George Michailovitch, Nicholas Michailovitch and Dmitri Konstantinovitch. The four were executed in the fortress of Sts. Peter and Paul, in Petrograd, on orders of the Extraordinary Commission on the night preceding the day appointed for their trial by the central government. They were shot and buried in a common grave by a party of Lettish riflemen and Chinese.

Shot 500 as Revenge

"After the murder of Uritsky, the Bolshevist chief of police of Petrograd, five hundred so-called bourgeois prisoners were shot at one stroke, without trial, as a measure of revenge. These prisoners had nothing to do with the assassination of Uritsky. They consisted of officers, teachers, professors, cooperators and workmen. There were also a number of women among them. A further list of five hundred was published in the official Bolshevist press, with the warning that they would be shot at the first attempted assassination of a Bolshevist commissar.

"Indeed, the Extraordinary Commission is all-powerful. The Bolshevist régime, basing itself solely on force and violence, must either kill or be killed. It leaves no room for the functioning of the normal, civilized impulses and agencies of human existence. The Bolsheviki kill because they are cowards, because they know that they are hated and detested by the people and that some day the people will rise and hurl them into oblivion. It is fear of their own skins that prompts the Bolsheviki in their indiscriminate and unprecedented terror. It is a régime that lives solely by the sword and by the sword it shall perish. That this is so is indicated in the latest news of popular uprisings in Russia."

(Next Sunday Sir Paul Dukes will tell how he became a member of the Communist Party, a munitions worker, a guest of the Soviet and a soldier in the Red army.)

SIR PAUL DUKES, formerly head of the English Secret Service in Soviet Russia

ЧРЕЗВЫЧ. КОМИССАР
Ц.И.К.ПЕТР.СОВ.
РАБ.и КР.-АРМ.ДЕП.
25 Ноября 1918 г.
№ 922.

УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ.

Дано сие Иосафу Афиренко в том что он служит у Чрезвыч.Комиссара Ц.И.К. Петр.Сов.Раб.и Кр.-Арм.Деп. в качестве канцелярскаго служащаго, что подписью и приложением печати удостоверяется.

Чрезвычайный Комиссар Ц. И. К.
Петрогр. Трудов. Коммуны
Секретарь

THIS is a certificate, forged, representing Sir Paul Dukes to be in the service of the Extraordinary Commission. It is written on a letterhead of the Chief Commissar of the Central Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Red Guards' Deputies, dated November 25, 1918. It was this certificate that was provided for Sir Paul Dukes when he first entered Soviet Russia from Finland. It bears his picture, in the disguise he wore on that occasion, and says:

"This is given to Joseph Afirenko in certification that he is employed by the Chief Commissar of the Central Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Red Guards' Deputies in the capacity of office clerk, which fact is confirmed by the appended signatures and photograph."

SIR PAUL DUKES as a Bolshevist worker, speaking to villagers in Soviet Russia

Р.С.Ф.С.Р.
Автомобильный
Отдел VIII-й Армии
Мая 25 дня 1919 г.
№ 198
г. Сватово

УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ.

Предъявитель сего есть действительно БАНКАУ АЛЕКСАНДР военнослужащий Авто-Отдела VIII-ой армии что, а также и собственноручная подпись его. Банкау
подписями и приложением печати удостоверяется.

Начальник Авто-отдела VIII Армии
Политический комиссар
Делопроизводитель

THIS is the certificate obtained by Sir Paul Dukes from the Bolshevist authorities when he served in the Red Army. It shows him to be a member of the automobile section of the VIIIth Bolshevist army, under the name of Alexander Bankau, one of the many names he assumed in Russia. The certificate says:

The bearer of this, Bankau, Alexander, is in military service, Automobile Division, VIIIth Army, to which is appended his own signature Bankau and which is certified to by the following signatures and seals."

The certificate bears the letterhead:

"Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, Automobile Division of the VIIIth Army."

It is dated May 25, 1919, town of Svatovo, and is countersigned by the names of the Chief of the Automobile Division, VIIIth Army, the political commissar in charge, and an official whose title may be translated as secretary-manager. The seals are those of the Automobile Division of the VIIIth Army.

The photograph attached represents the disguise affected by Sir Paul Dukes when serving in the automobile division.